

education, and the environment that were unnecessary to balance the budget.

I vetoed their plan, and the American people supported my decision. So this year, in clear contrast, we are getting things done to help protect our children and our parents. And we're doing it even as we move toward a balanced budget. That's good for our families and good for our Nation.

When we recognize that we're all in it together, that no one should have to go it alone, there are things that we must do as a nation together, we are building our bridge to the 21st century.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:35 p.m. on September 20 at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 21.

Statement on Supplemental Disaster Assistance Funding for Victims of Hurricanes Fran and Hortense *September 21, 1996*

I have asked the Congress today for \$291 million in supplemental funding for fiscal 1996 to help the victims of Hurricanes Fran and Hortense, bringing total Federal assistance in response to those hurricanes to over \$1.5 billion.

About half of the \$1.5 billion will go to North Carolina, with the rest spread among South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and perhaps other States. The Federal Government will pay \$1.2 billion from existing funds, and I have requested that the Congress allocate the additional \$291 million within congressional spending limits.

Total Federal aid almost surely will exceed \$1.5 billion, however. These figures do not include all of the expected claims that will come in against the Federal crop and flood insurance programs, both of which have written substantial numbers of policies in the affected States.

I recently visited North Carolina, and I saw for myself the devastation brought by the two hurricanes as well as the related flooding. In addition, senior members of my administration have visited the region to learn more

about the problems that the hurricanes have brought in such areas as agriculture, housing, and public power.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other Federal agencies are doing what they can to help the victims. FEMA, for instance, has provided a full week of 100 percent financed, direct assistance in the form of equipment, supplies, and personnel to save lives and property, and it will continue to provide 100 percent financing for debris removal. It also has provided extensive individual and public assistance, helping tens of thousands of Americans. In addition, I have directed FEMA officials to continue to assess whether and when North Carolina will be eligible for 90/10 financing, that is, Federal financing of 90 percent of the costs, for eligible public assistance repair.

Other Federal agencies that are providing assistance include the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development; Small Business Administration; Army Corps of Engineers; Federal Highway Administration; General Services Administration; and Corporation for National and Community Service.

But we can and must do more. The \$291 million that I am requesting today includes funding for the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation as well as the Small Business Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Specifically, the request includes:

Department of Agriculture, \$40 million—\$20 million for the Emergency Conservation Program to help farmers and ranchers whose farmland was damaged, and \$20 million for the Watershed and Flood Prevention to help communities reduce hazards to life and property;

Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, \$18 million—to enhance and improve infrastructure, such as water and sewer systems;

Department of Housing and Urban Development, \$110 million—\$100 million for Community Planning and Development and \$10 million for the Flexible

Subsidy Funds program, which provides capital funds for FHA-insured multi-family housing;

Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, \$82 million—to repair damages and to help meet other anticipated emergency relief needs in fiscal 1997;

Small Business Administration's Disaster Loan Program, \$22 million—to quickly service disaster loans in the affected States; and

Army Corps of Engineers, \$18.8 million—for high-priority emergency dredging and debris removal in critical waterways.

I strongly urge the Congress to quickly approve this request for supplemental funding. Together, we can provide the assistance that our fellow Americans—the victims of these natural disasters—so desperately need.

Remarks on Signing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997 and an Exchange With Reporters

September 23, 1996

The President. Today I have the privilege of signing legislation that will increase the security of our country and our families. Before I finish my statement, I would like to say a special word of thanks to three legislators who are retiring from the Congress who have provided great leadership on national security issues for a very long time.

I thank my friend Senator Nunn, who has been here since 1972, for many years was the chairman of the Armed Services Committee. And since he has been here we have always had a defense authorization bill, many times only because of his persistent efforts.

I thank Senator Cohen for so many things that he's done, particularly in the area of national defense and security, for his willingness to work for a genuine bipartisan foreign policy, and especially in view of the events of the last several days, for his decisive votes with regard to the Saudi AWACS which was a critical decision which enabled us to contain Saddam Hussein.

And finally, I thank Congressman Sonny Montgomery, the father of the GI bill, a great friend of the National Guard and Reserve and the veterans of this country, for more than 30 years of service here in the Congress.

So I thank them all for their role not only in this legislation but for their entire careers, which will be ending shortly and too shortly for many of us.

One of our central missions is to ensure that our country remains the strongest force for peace and freedom in the world. This bill makes good on our pledge to keep our Armed Forces the best trained, best equipped fighting force on Earth. It carries forward our modernization programs by funding crucial weapons systems, such as the F-22 and F/A-18E/F fighters, the Comanche helicopters, and the V-22 Osprey. It gives us the technological edge to prevail on the battlefields of tomorrow. It builds on our progress in reducing the nuclear threat. It continues programs sponsored by Senators Nunn and Lugar to destroy thousands of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union and to prevent dangerous materials from these weapons from falling into the wrong hands.

This month our Nation has again been reminded of the extraordinary skill and dedication of our Armed Forces. In Iraq our men and women in uniform have shown their strength in advancing our strategic interests. In Bosnia our troops and their IFOR counterparts have helped to make possible the elections which mark another milestone on the road of that nation's recovery.

Our service men and women go the extra mile for us and we in turn should do the same for them. This bill does that by paying for improvements in family and troop housing, along with new starts in military construction projects. It provides a pay raise of 3 percent, nearly 1 percent more than the law now provides. Our troops have more than earned that.

The legislation protects not only our national security but also our security at home. The Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act of 1996, which is part of this legislation, dramatically toughens the law against stalkers, those who would threaten, harass, and instill fear in others, especially